

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8803
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUCHAREST 2147

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: RO XF OREP (VANIK, CHARLES A.) OVIP (CEAUSESCU, NICOLAE)
SUBJ: CODEL VANIK: DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST WITH
PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU MARCH 31

1. PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU SAID THAT FOLLOWING SADAT'S RECENT MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE AND TALKS WITH BEGIN, THERE HAD APPEARED TO BE PROSPECTS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. TO HIS GREAT SURPRISE, HOWEVER, ISRAEL'S POSITION BECAME HARSHER AND EVEN MORE RIGID. THEN NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAD BROUGHT SO MUCH HOPE BROKE OFF ABRUPTLY.

2. VANIK INTERJECTED TO SAY THAT BEGIN PROBABLY RAN INTO PROBLEMS WITHIN HIS CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUENCY. HE POSSIBLY FEARED THAT HE WAS LOSING SUPPORT FROM HIS POLITICAL BASE IN ISRAEL. HOWEVER VANIK FELT THAT A COMPARISON COULD BE MADE TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S EFFORTS TO MOVE TOWARD DETENTE. VANIK SAID HE PERSONALLY FELT A LIBERAL U.S. GOVERNMENT COULD NOT HAVE MADE AS MUCH PROGRESS ON DETENTE AS PRESIDENT NIXON ACHIEVED. A CONSERVATIVE SUCH AS BEGIN STOOD A BETTER CHANCE OF BRINGING ISRAEL FORWARD IN DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF THE MIDDLE EAST. HE HOPED THAT BEGIN WILL GET SUPPORT FROM OTHERS IN
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ISRAEL IN HIS PEACE INITIATIVES. THESE EFFORTS SHOULD CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S SUPPORT; OTHERWISE THEY MAY WELL FAIL.

3. PRESENT CEAUSESCU SAID THE CENTRAL PROBLEM IS THAT ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO TAKE CLEAR DECISIONS VERY SOON. ROMANIA'S GENERAL FEELING FROM ITS OWN INTELLIGENCE WAS

THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL REALLY WISHED PEACE AND THERE WAS NO REAL RESISTANCE OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST PEACE. A DECISION MUST BE MADE TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT AND ULTIMATELY WITH SYRIA, JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING THE PLO. A DECISION MUST BE MADE TO WITHDRAW FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES INCLUDING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. A DECISION MUST BE MADE TO ALLOW SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS. WITHOUT ALL THIS THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF LASTING PEACE.

4. VANIK SAID ETHNIC ROMANIANS IN ISRAEL COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN URGING MOVEMENT TOWARDS A SOUND SOLUTION. WHILE ROMANIA ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF ISRAEL'S INTEGRITY AND SECURITY, THE RECENT PLO ONSLAUGHTS FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON HAD CREATED A NEW PROBLEM. FOR MANY ISRAELIS THE PROBLEM OF NOT GOING BACK TO PRE-WAR BORDERS IS ONE OF SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS. GOLAN HEIGHTS AND WEST BANK WERE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SETTLEMENTS IN GAZA INsofar AS SECURITY IS CONCERNED, AND ISRAEL WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO GIVE UP THESE AREAS UNLESS THERE IS SOME INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO KEEP THEM SECURE. HE HOPED PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU WOULD URGE PRESIDENT SADAT NOT TO LOSE HEART DESPITE THE RECENT DIFFICULTIES IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

5. CEAUSESCU SAID THE PROBLEM OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY MUST
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BE EXAMINED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REGION'S GEOGRAPHY. SECURITY CAN BE GUARANTEED ONLY BY GOOD RELATIONS WITHIN THE REGION. NO OTHER TYPE OF SECURITY WOULD BE PERMANENT EVEN IF ISRAEL KEPT ALL OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, BECAUSE THERE ARE 100 MILLION ARABS LIVING IN THE REGION. CEAUSESCU CONTRASTED WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS PROBLEMS OF SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND THOSE IN EUROPE. IN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, HE SAID, A DIFFERENT VALUE WAS PLACED ON SECURITY: FRONTIERS ARE IMAGINARY AND REPRESENT NOTHING WITHOUT GUARANTEES OF PEACE. ONE KILOMETER MORE OR LESS IS NO REAL GUARANTEE FOR SECURITY, AND TERRITORIAL DISPUTES OF THIS KIND BRING MORE DISCORD THAN FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARDS SOLUTIONS.

6. VANIK SAID THE QUESTION MAY BE ONE OF GRADUAL TRANSFER OF THE DISPUTED TERRITORIES. UNITED STATES TOOK 20 YEARS TO GIVE UP OKINAWA AND NOW THE COUNTRY IS TORN OVER THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE. MAYBE A SLOWER TRANSFER WHILE GENERAL RELATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST IMPROVE WOULD BE A POSSIBLE APPROACH.

7. CEAUSESCU SAID THE SITUATIONS WERE NOT COMPARABLE. IN

THE MIDDLE EAST THE QUESTION BOILS DOWN TO THE PROBLEM OF A PEOPLE WHO FOR 30 YEARS HAVE HAD NO HOME. THEY SEEK A HOME AND INTEND TO HAVE ONE BY WHATEVER MEANS POSSIBLE. SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT. WHETHER IT BE IN FEDERATION WITH JORDAN AND/OR ISRAEL IS ANOTHER MATTER, BUT THE PALESTINIANS HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THEIR FUTURE. WE MUST FIRST SEARCH FOR A MORE RAPID SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM OF SELF-DETERMINATION. THEN IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD WAYS COULD BE PROVIDED TO ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES PREVENTING NEW CLASHES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE.

8. CEAUSESCU RECOGNIZED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A MAJOR
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STAKE IN ISRAEL, BUT HE NOTED ALSO THAT THE U.S. HAD AN IMPORTANT STAKE IN THE WHOLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST IN TERMS OF ITS OIL. "IS THE UNITED STATES PREPARED TO GIVE UP

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUCHAREST 2147
EXDIS

THE WHOLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST IN ORDER TO KEEP ISRAEL IN THE WEST BANK?" HE ASKED. "WHAT HAPPENS IF ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS ASK FOR HELP FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY AS ETHIOPIA DID?" REFERRING TO THE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY SUPPORT. CEAUSESCU SAID IN ETHIOPIA'S CASE THE U.S. TOOK THE CORRECT STAND INASMUCH AS WHEN SOMALIA SENT TROOPS ACROSS THE ETHIOPIAN BORDER THE U.S. DID NOT INTERFERE, BUT WHAT,

HE ASKED,
WOULD THE U.S. DO IF OTHER STATES PARTICIPATED
IN THE LIBERATION OF THE WEST BANK BUT DID NOT BECOME
INVOLVED IN LEGAL ISRAEL TERRITORY? CEAUSESCU SAID THERE
IS A STRONG DANGER OF THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN
THE MIDDLE EAST IF ISRAEL STICKS TO THE PRESENT SITUATION.
SADAT CLEARLY OPENED PROSPECTS WHICH ISRAEL HAD NOT DARED
TO DREAM OF, BUT IN RESPONSE TO HIS INITIATIVE ISRAEL
ADOPTED A HARD POSITION. CEAUSESCU SAID THE U.S. CONTINUES
TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT WORD TO SAY IN THIS QUESTION AND SHOULD
CONTINUE TO HELP BRING ABOUT PEACE. OTHERWISE THINGS CAN
BECOME VERY COMPLICATED IN A BRIEF SPAN.

9. VANIK URGED CEAUSESCU TO TALK NOT ONLY TO PRESIDENT
CARTER BUT TO ALL AMERICANS THROUGH THE MEDIA ON THE
MIDDLE EAST QUESTION. CEAUSESCU WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE
MEDIA AND COULD POINT OUT THE CRITICAL NATURE OF THE TIME-
FRAME OF THE CRISIS AND THE BENEFIT THAT CAN COME FROM
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SOME FORM OF ADJUDICATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PARTICULARLY
IF HIS PLEA IS MADE WITH HIS CUSTOMARY OBJECTIVITY AND
WITHOUT ANY PARTIALITY FOR ANY OF THE PARTIES IN THE
DISPUTE.

10. CEAUSESCU REPLIED THAT ROMANIA WAS NEITHER PRO-ARAB
NOR PRO-ISRAELI, BUT HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH AND
ONLY WISHED ISRAEL TO ADOPT A MORE RATIONAL STAND. IT
WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PRESENT POSITION. VANIK
SAID THAT NATIONALISTIC SENTIMENT DEVELOPS VERY RAPIDLY
AND MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR NATIONS TO TAKE IMPORTANT
STEPS ON SUCH MATTERS AS ISRAELI TERRITORIES AND THE
PANAMA CANAL. CEAUSESCU SAID NATIONALISM IS NOT NECESSARILY
AN UNFAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDED THE RIGHT OF EACH
NATION IS CONSIDERED IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIGHT OF THE
OTHER NATIONS.
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